



Conservation chronicle

Chair's Update

By Rob Bohmann

"No river can return to its source, yet all rivers must have a beginning." (Native American Proverb)

I hope that everyone has had a great summer, and now that fall is here, you find the time to spend outdoors, enjoying Wisconsin's rich and beautiful natural resources.

I would like to thank each and every one of you for another successful convention this past May. District 3 did an outstanding job in hosting our hospitality room. Our bucket raffle continues to get bigger and better because of the wonderful donations you continue to contribute. The proceeds from the raffle continue to grow every year with this being our best year ever in raising almost four-thousand dollars. This year's gun board was also a huge success by clearing a little over two-thousand dollars which will be our donation to next year's Midwest Outdoor Heritage Education Expo. None of this would be possible without your hard work and generosity, and for that I am truly grateful.

It's always a pleasure for me to meet up with old friends and make new ones at the convention every year. Join me in welcoming all of our new delegates as well as our eighteen youth delegates this year. Please take the time to recognize them if you see them at our committee meetings. I

would also like welcome Ken Anderson (D3), Matt Sedelbauer (D6), Terri Roehig (D8) and Jayne Meyer (D10) to the Executive Council this next year. I'm looking forward to working with them this upcoming year.

We held a leadership training meeting in June for all committee chairs, vice-chairs and secretaries as well as the County Deer Advisory Councils (CDAC) chairs and alternates. The first part of the meeting was an effort to ensure that all of our committee meetings are being held as consistently and efficiently as possible. By the end of the day, we hoped that our committee leadership had a better understanding of Wisconsin's Open Meetings Law, Roberts Rules of Order, how to work with the media and how to manage our meetings effectively. The Executive Committee is committed to continually providing our leadership team with the tools necessary to be successful. The second part of the meeting covered chair's roles and responsibilities on the County Deer Advisory Councils (CDAC). I would like to thank Kari Lee-Zimmermann (DNR), Trisha Nitschke (DNR), Dan Kramarz (DNR), Kurt Theide (DNR) and Tom Hauge (DNR) for taking the time out of their busy schedules to assist the Congress that day.

It's mid-September and most have our committees



have met. I'm quite sure that committees have been busy discussing the 213 citizen resolutions that passed around the state this last April. I'd like to remind committee officers that their meeting minutes and questions for the spring hearing questionnaire need to be submitted to Kari within 30 days after their committee meeting. The intent of this is in response to the amount of questions that were rejected by the council last January. All questions forwarded out of committees will be reviewed by Kari. Any suggestions for corrections or changes will be forwarded back to committee chairs to review and make the appropriate changes. This is an effort to ensure that your questions do not get rejected at the council meeting in January.

There continues to be a growing concern over the yellow perch population on Lake Michigan. The department will

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Green & Healthy Schools Wisconsin: connecting students to nature



By Cindy Koepke, WDNR

The Green & Healthy Schools (GHS) program provides the opportunity to recognize schools for their achievements as they teach their students to conserve natural resources, care for the environment, and create a healthy place to learn. Currently there are over 200 participating Wisconsin schools (see our website, ghswisconsin.org, for a county-by-county list).

The GHS program has nine focus areas allowing flexibility for schools to customize their application based on different interests and local resources. Two of the focus areas are Environmental & Sustainability Education and Community Involvement. The goal of the Environmental & Sustainability Education focus area is to give our young people the skills and knowledge to understand and

analyze complex issues related to science and the natural world and to connect with their local community. A driving force for this focus area is to get kids outdoors learning in the natural environment, building a sense of place, and connecting to community resources. It is about building real-life skills on their school grounds or at their school forest. Building those skills and knowledge in the next generation prepares them for the future challenges of natural resource conservation and being an involved citizen of Wisconsin.

Through the Community Involvement focus area, schools demonstrate how their students and staff are reaching beyond four walls and connecting to the community and how community members are brought into the school for learning opportunities. One way to connect these two focus areas is

through outdoor education and recreation. There are many excellent examples of what GHS Wisconsin schools are doing in their community including: taking kids to a nature center or school forest, working on habitat restoration projects, starting an after-school club for outdoor activities, and more. By having community members share their knowledge and their appreciation of the outdoors, we can get more students outdoors, active, and building their connection to nature. We welcome WCC delegates to share their knowledge and experience with their local schools and encourage youth delegates to share their appreciation of Wisconsin's great outdoors with their fellow students. For more information on GHS Wisconsin, please visit ghswisconsin.org or email the GHS coordinator at DNRGHSwisconsin@wisconsin.gov.

Calling all Facebooker's: "Like" and "Share" the WCC

By Staush Grusynski

Over the last four years with Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters I've traveled to many local conservation club meetings across Northeast Wisconsin and there is one common thread that sportsmen and women are constantly addressing. No matter if it's a hook and bullet club, a land stewardship organization or a lake association; the questions are always the same. "How can we get the next generation involved in conservation? How can we get them outdoors enjoying Wisconsin's natural resources?" In my short time on the Outreach and Public Relations

Committee of WCC this conversation is continually echoed during our meetings.

Similarly, the Wisconsin Conservation Congress recently has taken a hard look at the direction, the approach and the vision the Congress in the new 2013-2018 strategic plan. In this 37 page plan that leadership and delegates worked diligently on for months, the second goal of the plan was "How can delegates create greater awareness of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress?" We have tools in the tool box to start addressing awareness, membership retention and

recruitment methods. The questions above of youth involvement and greater awareness of the Conservation Congress are intertwined and the answers are critical to the future success of this organization.

So, what can we do now to start looking for answers? First, let's go where they are.

Facebook, it's time to log on and "Like" Wisconsin Conservation Congress! When was the last time you told your son, daughter or grand kids to get off their phones and get outside? Most likely they were checking their Facebook. Facebook has 1.28 Billion users and connects to the very generation we are

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Delegate Profile: Staush Gruszynski, Brown Co.

A young man on the go!

By Lee Fahrney

To say that Brown County delegate Staush Gruszynski presents as a busy man is an understatement. Since his election to the Congress in 2012, he has already contributed immensely to the organization that he says “plays a critical role in citizen input and decision-making.”

He was elected chair of the Brown County delegation in 2013 and currently serves on the Outreach/Public Relations Committee and the 10-Year Fish & Wildlife Plan Committee. Perhaps most importantly, Staush agreed to serve as administrator of the Congress Facebook page.

“Working in the field of conservation and being an admirer of Aldo Leopold, it’s an honor to join the ranks of countless dedicated Conservation Congress delegates” he said. “I’m involved with the Congress because of the tradition and unique opportunity for input regarding Wisconsin’s natural resources.

In addition to his work with the Congress, Staush stays busy with his primary occupation as an organizer for the northeast region of the Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters. He also serves on the Brown County Board of Supervisors and the board of directors for the Green Bay chapter of Trout Unlimited.

When he finds the time, Staush enjoys ice fishing (his favorite) on Green Bay and all across Wisconsin with family and friends. Other outdoor activities include camping and hiking in the summer, hunting whitetails in the fall and darkhouse spearing in the winter.

If that’s not enough to keep him busy, he has also taken up fly fishing.



Staush (inset and far right) is heavily involved in local and statewide conservation efforts (submitted photos).

“I’ve recently picked up a fly rod, and it’s been an adventure,” he reports, adding that “I’ve been lucky enough to have a few great mentors and guides in the process.”

Citing much tradition among family members with hunting whitetails, Staush did not get involved until after graduating from high school. He lists the harvest of a 10-point buck (his first) as his most enjoyable outdoor experience. “My adrenaline went through the roof, and I’ve been hooked ever since to chasing whitetails.”

Staush derives great satisfaction from working within the Conservation Congress. “The role of the Conservation Congress is constantly developing, and it’s exciting to be a part of the changes as we work to garner more involvement with the Congress in our local communities and raise awareness statewide,” he notes. “Working with the delegates and department staff that have years of experience in conservation is truly rewarding. One of my favorite duties as a delegate is having conversations with hunters and anglers about the Congress,

our work and how we can get the next generation involved in Wisconsin’s outdoors.”

Staush also demonstrates a strong element of gratitude and appreciation regarding the efforts of others, including his newly-betrothed fiancée, Colleen Adams. “I’m very lucky to have a partner that appreciates and enjoys the outdoors as much as I do,” he said. “She’s my rock.”

Staush also credits his parents, especially his dad, with instilling in him a conservation ethic at an early age. “We were always involved in the outdoors growing up,” he notes. “I have two brothers that I’ve been able to experience a lot of great moments with – fishing, hunting and enjoying Wisconsin’s natural resources.”

Staush Gruszynski clearly stands out as a high-energy and dedicated outdoorsman and conservationist. The Wisconsin Conservation Congress is fortunate, indeed, to count him among its members.

The Parliamentarian's Perspective

By Larry Bonde, Vice-Chair

As an organization of delegates who have been selected to represent the citizens of their counties, the conduct of our delegates is paramount to the success of our organization. Our delegates are representing the Congress in a very public way and the actions of each delegate reflect on the organization as a whole. What I would like to focus on in this article is communicating with your constituents from your county.

The best form of communication is always face to face. It allows each person to read the others body language and gain a better understanding of the tone of what is being communicated. Much of the communication we do with our constituents may be at the Spring Hearing or at monthly meetings of our rod and gun clubs. However, this is pretty limited interaction since we are only reaching a small portion of the people in our county.

And unfortunately face to face discussions are not always possible. Often I receive phone calls from some of my constituents, who are not of the hook and bullet crowd, and they may not have a vast understanding of what the WCC is or the processes we have to follow. Generally, a phone conversation I find is a good way to communicate but what a person says can be misunderstood if you are not able to read their expressions or their body language signals. Once in a while phone conversation can be the result of a controversial or contentious issue. The person I may be talking to might not be in agreement with the Congress or my personal opinions. At those times I find it best to let that person share their perspective and provide them an ear so they feel their concerns are being heard. One of the phrases I like to use is "reasonable people can disagree." What we as WCC dele-

gates need to remember that in this role as a WCC delegate, even if constituents are being less than polite, we should refrain from allowing ourselves to get upset and engage ourselves in an argument. It is important for us to remember that all the people of our county are our constituents and not only those who agree with us.

In this age of increasing technology, emails can be a great way to communicate since we can send them when we have the time and it is rather easy to share information from our smart phone or from the comfort of our home computer. That being said, email communication does have its pitfalls. Emails, and letters for that matter, can also be misinterpreted. It is hard to know the tone of what is being communicated and if someone is very direct in their wording it is very easy to misunderstand what is being said. Alternately, email allows people a sense of anonymity and sometimes people will type something in an email that they would not say to someone in person. Too often people get emails that may be confrontational and when people get upset they fire back with their own e-mail that is equally confrontational or impolite. This has been an issue that has been brought up to WCC leadership several times in the past year and it is something that we take very seriously and want to address.

Chair Rob Bohmann sent out several letters to all delegates this past year regarding that very issue. In his first letters he stated, "Disparaging comments and personal attacks toward others or about others is entirely unprofessional, out of line, and unacceptable. This type of behavior reflects poorly on each one of our delegates and on the Conservation Congress as a whole. The Congress does not condone it, nor will we tolerate it. Congress delegates should only engage in

civil discourse and respectful exchange of ideas.

If you are contacted by someone who is being disrespectful in their attempt to convey their position, do not engage them. Personal attacks just lead to more personal attacks and nothing useful will come of that. This is not a productive way to conduct business for either side and it needs to stop."

A helpful tool I have used when getting upset with a communication is to wait a day or two so to allow an opportunity to cool down. It also allows me to better think things through, maybe consult another person to make sure I am looking at the issue properly and organize my thoughts so if I do reply it is a well thought out response that is respectful of a differing opinion. As Rob pointed out in his second letter, "You don't have to agree with a citizen's comments, but as an elected delegate, you represent the citizens of this state and you are expected to listen to their comments, weigh them, and be respectful of them. The citizens of Wisconsin and the WCC hold you, our delegates, to a higher standard. We expect you to be an example for the rest of the state by continuing to conduct the business of resource management through citizen input with civility and respect."

It is important, as delegates, that our conduct always represents the Congress in a positive light. It's always good to listen to others even if at the time you may think they are wrong. Even if we disagree, by listening to the opposing concerns it will give you a better understanding of their perspective and issues that we maybe have not thought of. We all are different and come from different backgrounds so in the end, we must always remember that sometimes both parties may be reasonable people and it is OK if we don't agree.

County Deer Advisory Councils: An opportunity to lead

By Lee Fahrney

There is a new player on the deer management landscape. Beginning this fall, newly-minted County Deer Advisory Councils (CDACs) will gather public opinion and offer the Department of Natural Resources recommendations on deer populations, antlerless quotas and season options. The CDAC charter also includes the review and consideration of metrics on deer herd trends, impacts and human interaction. The data gathered will be passed on to the Natural Resources Board for implementation in 2015.

The Conservation Congress will play a major role in the evolution of this major initiative in deer management in Wisconsin. A WCC delegate will chair the CDAC in each of Wisconsin's 72 counties. Other delegates are encouraged to get involved to ensure this important natural resource is properly managed for future generations to enjoy.

"This fits nicely with the county-based deer management system that we're looking at," said WCC Chair Rob Bohmann. "But we need to get everybody up to speed on their role in the process."

"This gives citizens an opportunity to help manage the deer herd in their counties," Bohmann said. "It also gives the Congress an opportunity to share information with their constituencies at the county level during the spring hearings," Bohmann said. "CDAC brings the deer management process to the local level where it should be," he declared.

The scope of the project is "very big," according to DNR Wildlife Bureau Chief Tom Hauge in an overview presented to key delegates to the Wisconsin

Conservation Congress assembled at Stevens Point, June 21, 2014. The WCC delegates gathered to learn more about the initiative and gain an understanding of the important role the Congress will play in its implementation. Other members will be drawn from an extensive list of stakeholders.



DNR Wildlife Bureau Director Tom Hauge presented an overview of an implementation plan regarding the newly-organized County Deer Advisory Council structure to a Wisconsin Conservation Congress assembly in Stevens Point, June 21. The Conservation Congress will spearhead the effort along with the DNR. Photo by Lee Fahrney.

Hauge outlined potential membership on each county committee as follows: agriculture, forestry, tourism, local clubs, urban/metro, transportation, Tribal entities and a participant in the Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP). Up to 575 citizens statewide will be involved during a three-year cycle. CDAC members will be appointed to three-year terms. They must be residents of the county and three of the members to possess valid hunting licenses.

The process of committee selection includes a letter from DNR Secretary Cathy Stepp to various entities such as the secretaries of tourism and DATCP, Wisconsin Forestry Council and tribal chairs asking for nominations. Local CDAC chairs, DNR wildlife biologist and conservation wardens will review applications from local clubs. Priority will be given to persons representing county-wide alliances.

The first meetings will be held in Sept.-Nov., 2014 when quota recommendations will be set based upon objectives for a three-year cycle. In December, the CDACs will send on their recommendations for 2015-17 unit deer population goals for review by the DNR. The timeline calls for the NRB to approve deer population goals in February. During the third year, each CDAC will make recommendations for the next three-year cycle. The format follows Robert's Rules of Order and allows for citizen testimony. Minutes of each meeting will be kept and published.

The first fall meetings will occur in mid-to-late September. The agenda will include herd status reports for each county. The second meeting will be held toward the end of October. The respective CDAC committees will submit preliminary recommendations to increase, maintain or decrease current herd populations to be forwarded to DNR by Oct. 31. A public comment period on the preliminary recommendations will transpire Nov.3 – Dec.5.

Hauge summarized the broad implications of the new program: "You're about to start something that no other state has done." For more information, log on to the DNR website at www.dnr.wi.gov, click on Conservation Congress and County Deer Advisory Councils under Community Outreach.



Jim Binder (Waupaca) caught this Flathead Catfish on the Wisconsin River near Nekoosa.

2014 Wausau Convention Recap

Chair Bohmann's report to the Natural Resources Board on the 2014 convention.

I would like to take this opportunity to review the business conducted by the Congress at our annual meeting. The Wisconsin Conservation Congress convened for its 80th annual convention on May 8, 9, and 10, 2014, in Wausau. Our statewide delegation voted on the proposed DNR rule change, DNR advisory questions, Board advisory questions, and each of the proposed congress advisory questions from the 2014 spring hearing questionnaire.

WCC Advisory Questions

There were 23 Congress advisory proposals presented for public comment at this year's Spring Hearings. Eighteen of these proposals were recommended for advancement to the Department, Natural Resources Board, and Legislature for consideration as possible future rule changes or legislation. The five proposals that were not supported by the delegation for advancement were also not supported by the public vote. These included the tundra swan hunting season, the transferring of a license or permit to anyone eligible to use it, the protection of white deer in the CWD zone, the retrieval of hunting dogs on private land without landowner permission, and increasing the Wisconsin inland waters trout stamp fee. Included in the recommendations advanced to the Department, Board, and Legislature for further consideration are the request for a Senior Resident Conservation Patron License, preventing non-resident novices from applying for LTH bear programs, creating a program to educate shooting ranges about managing lead, and regulations to limit the spread of

terrestrial invasive species.

Congress Business

This convention was historic in more ways than one. Besides being the 80th anniversary of the Congress, the Congress leadership unveiled efforts to continue implementing the strategic plan and perhaps make some changes to the Spring Hearings. This is also the second year we have had the Youth Conservation Congress, an initiative undertaken following a request by this board. We are working to expand the program and better engage our youth delegates. We now have 17 students involved as youth delegates (seven of whom are new this year), and a number of them were able to attend the convention and participate in the discussion and breakout sessions arranged specifically for them. This marked a significant milestone for the Conservation Congress and we look forward to increased youth participation in our organization in the future.

In addition, the county delegations determined who would be chairing the newly created County Deer Advisory Committees. Having Congress delegates lead these committees is a highly visible and important role for the Congress. We look forward to this opportunity and are planning a training session for our delegates to ensure they are up to the challenge.

Awards

Again this year the Congress recognized a number of DNR employees for their outstanding service. Warden Tom Van Haren was recognized for his exemplary service to the



Mike Rogers, Sauk County, received the WCC's "heavy lifter" award. Photo by Lee Fahrney.

Congress and the citizens of this state over his extensive career as Administrative Warden. John Olson, Furbearer Ecologist, received an award for his commitment to working cooperatively with citizens and expanding opportunities. Fisheries biologist Ben Heussner received our fisheries award for his dedication and excellent work improving the habitat and fisheries in his work area of Waukesha County and his collaborative efforts with local user groups. Our warden of the year, Bob Stroess, formerly of Manitowoc County (now stationed in Green Bay), was recognized for his outstanding law enforcement efforts, his well-rounded program, and his work to involve the community in protecting Wisconsin's resources. Mike Stahl (Oconto County) was awarded the waterfowl officer of the year by the WCC Migratory Committee for his leadership within his community and commitment to waterfowl education. We also honored Mike Rogers from Sauk County, with our newly named David A. Ladd Delegate of the Year Award. Mike has been on the Congress for 24 years and he is always willing to step up to the

plate when called and ready to take a youth or novice hunter out into the field with him.

The WCC also started a new tradition this year by beginning a Wisconsin Conservation Congress Hall of Fame. The inaugural inductee was Dave Ladd who, as you know, has created a legacy devoted to conservation. We look forward to continuing this tradition by inducting many more deserving individuals in the years to come.

We handed our years of service certificates and pins to those delegates who have served the congress for 15, 20, 25, 30 and over 35 years. Impressively, we have 12 delegates that individually have 35 or more years of service to the Congress.

Rounding out our awards, the 2013 Statewide Conservation Organization of the Year Award went to the Urban Ecology Center, the Outstanding Local Organization was awarded the Bad River Watershed Association, and the 2013 Educator of the Year was awarded to Trent Tonn, a teacher in Burlington, who actively teaches species identification and hunting, trapping, fishing, and outdoor skills to his students.

DNR Rule Change Proposals

The full delegation reviewed and registered their support or opposition to each of the questions that the Department presented.

This year Fisheries Management presented one rule change proposal for public consideration on motor trolling and is advancing it for Board adoption. The Congress supports this rule change as presented.

In respect to the DNR's advisory questions, all of the Congress votes followed the majority vote of the public to support or reject these ideas but we recognize that those are not proposed rule changes at this time and any rules relating to those questions would be brought before the Board at a future date.

In addition, the Congress supported the NRB's advisory question numbers 32 and 33 relating to the simplification of stamp requirements for hunting and fishing, as well as question 34 pertaining to banning the feeding of deer prior to the gun deer season. The delegation rejected question 35 concerning the harvest of white and

albino deer.

Officer Elections

On Friday, May 9 the delegates from our twelve districts elected their 2014-15 Executive Councilors. I would like to thank each of the councilors from 2013-14 that will not be returning this year as councilors and also congratulate those that have been elected or reelected. I have included a list of our new Executive Council in this memo for your information.

As recommended by the strategic plan and implemented for the first year in 2013, our Executive Committee now includes five members. The public relations and outreach coordinator position will be held by Jayne Meyer (Dane County) and Al Suchla (Trempealeau County) will continue in his role as historian. Joe Weiss (Washburn County) was re-elected as the secretary, Larry Bonde (Manitowoc County) was re-elected to vice-chair, and I was honored to be re-elected to serve another year as Chair.

In closing I would like to thank Chair Cole for his presentation at our convention, and Board members Jane Wiley, Greg Kazmierski, and Gary

Zimmer for attending our meeting. It was great to have so many of you at our convention engaging with our delegates. Your involvement and attendance is a testament to your commitment to the role of the Congress as an advisory body to the Natural Resources Board.



2014-2015 WCC Executive Council: (Standing from left to right) Dale Maas, Ken Risley, Arlyn Splitt, Lee Fahrney, Mike Rogers, Jacob Janowski, Rick Olson, Josh Hennlich, Dave Larson, Marcell Wieloch, Terri Roehrig, Bob Ellingson, Matthew Sedelbauer, Stan Brownell, Al Brown, Al Shook, Kevin Smaby, and John Aschenbrenner. Sitting from left to right are Jayne Meyer, Joe Weiss, Rob Bohmann, and Larry Bonde. Not pictured are Al Suchla and Ken Anderson.

2013, A Year to Remember!

By Jim Heffner

What is better than a day on the water fishing with family or friends? We have been taking our granddaughter Courtney, fishing with us since she was four years old. She caught her first blue gill off of a pier on one of our favorite lakes. She enjoyed fishing so much that by the time she was ten years old she was casting for muskies.

Courtney has fished the National Championship Musky Open held in Eagle River starting in 2012. The first year she fished as grandpa's partner in the Youth/Guardian division.

The second year, 2013, she fished as grandma's partner. The gals were the winning combination for catching a musky. After only fifteen minutes on the water, on August 16, which is grandma's birthday, Courtney caught her first musky. It was a beautiful 40" fish. She fought the fish and grandpa netted and successfully released the fish.

On Sunday at the Awards Presentation ceremony, Jim, aka grandpa, won the Bob James Sportsman Award. This was a total surprise and left me speechless. Well, at least for a few

minutes! The Blackhawk Musky Club from Janesville, WI and Headwaters Chapter 12, Muskies Inc. of Eagle River, WI both nominated me for the award. Some of the activities I have been involved with include: Take-A-Kid Fishing programs, Secretary and newsletter editor for nine years, Historian and served on the Board of Directors for the Blackhawk Club. My involvement with Blackhawk has spanned 33 years. While a member



Jim Heffner (Oneida County delegate) with Courtney Froemming (granddaughter and WCC youth delegate from Washington County). Submitted photo.

with the Winnebago Musky Club of Fond du Lac, WI I was on the Board of Directors, worked with the Take-A-Kid Fishing program, and worked on a two year musky habitat study with the WI DNR and the MI

DNR. My membership with Winnebago is presently at 12 years. With the Headwaters Chapter I have served on the Board of Directors, was the Spring Classic Tournament Director, during which time I introduced judge boats for the tournament, Kids Fishing Tips, one of the instructors for the Fishing Club at Sugar Camp Elementary School, and helped out with other club activities. My involvement with Headwaters

expands over 10 years with a Lifetime Membership with Muskies, Inc. On August 21, 1964 I caught my first musky on my first try at musky fishing. It was a 46" beauty. I was hooked for life. This August, 2014 will be my 50th anniversary of being involved with muskies.

This is my 8th year of being on the Wisconsin Conservation Congress as an Oneida County Delegate. Courtney, is on the Youth Conserva-

tion Congress for Washington County.

Protect our natural resources for our future generations.

The Bear's Den...

By Bob Wilberscheid

Each year at the annual DNR/Conservation Congress spring hearings held in every county around the state the second Monday of April, citizens are encouraged to submit resolutions.

In addition to following the correct

format, the resolution must have statewide impact, include a reasonable cause for the change presented and clearly suggest a solution and a description of the action desired.

This year there was just south of 250 resolutions submitted. A number of the resolutions were essentially identi-

cal, brought to various county hearings to be evaluated and voted upon by the citizens assembled.

Among these resolutions were concerns about the proposed open pit mine, air standards for respirable silica dust, changing the legal definition of albino and

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white deer and repealing the iron mining law.

Resolutions that pass in their county are forwarded to the Congress' Rules and Resolutions Committee where they are assigned to appropriate study committees.

If they pass through the study committee they are referred to the Executive Council in question format and recommended as an advisory question on the following April's spring hearing questionnaire.

After reading through this year's resolutions, I found several that might be viewed as somewhat out of the mainstream or just plain controversial.

Out of Barron and Polk counties came a proposal that involved antler point restrictions (APR). The impetus was to protect a certain percentage of yearling bucks in these counties by having a minimum of four legal points on one side for a legal buck.

There would be a 3-year trial and the resolution would not apply to youth or disabled hunters.

The proposal pointed out that 22 other states have used APR with little or no negative impact on hunter recruitment or retention.

A resolution out of Dane county asked to restore beavers to protected status in Wisconsin. The thrust of the argument stated that beavers are by their nature "watershed engineers."

The author goes on to contend that coexisting with beavers is possible and there are many simple solutions to resolve conflicts where their activity is not welcome.

Again out of Dane County came a resolution to provide funding for "humane" wildlife education in our public schools. The problem was that Wisconsin mandated a course last year in public schools for hunting and trapping, creating in the author's view "an imbalance in our educational sys-

tem."

The resolution proposed mandated humane wildlife education, thereby, "promoting future generations of wildlife rehabbers and the wildlife watching industry and the tremendous economic benefit to our state."

A Manitowoc County resident proposed removing the 36-inch limit on sturgeon during the sturgeon season. Problems included the difficulty of judging the exact size of a fish you see momentarily in sometimes murky water; the fact that female sturgeon don't spawn until they are about 55-inches or 30 years old; and that, "It is a known fact that undersized fish that have been harvested over the years," were slid under the ice or taken home undetected.

The author feels that it would be beneficial to the sturgeon population to have those fish counted toward the quota.

Out of Shawano County came a resolution to introduce a rule change to allow a once in a lifetime tag for lake sturgeon on the Wolf River system with a hook and line season.

The basic rationale is that sportsmen that aren't involved in spearing get a chance to harvest a sturgeon.

While there is a youth hunt for deer in October, there is no provision for those on the other end of the spectrum with old bones.

A Vilas County resident would rectify that situation by having a, "two day weekend senior citizen deer hunt for those ages 65 or older prior to the traditional November gun deer season."

Out of Sauk County comes a proposal to introduce a season on coyotes. The author contends that the coyote population, "seems to be declining in many areas," and a season would protect the "valuable predator" when it's having pups.

Do you want Wisconsin to have a state

butterfly? A resolution from Outagamie County proposes the state designate the Monarch butterfly for that honor.

Twenty seven other states have a state butterfly and Wisconsin could join Minnesota and Illinois that have the Monarch as their state butterfly.

How about reduced license and permit fees for low income individuals? The author from Fond du Lac County feels that currently there are many low income individuals unable to afford the cost of hunting and fishing licenses and permits.

You may have noticed that I have listed these resolutions without comments as to their contents' veracity or value. I leave it up to you to formulate an opinion on any or all of these as to their validity.

Facebook, from page 2

trying to reach. The more the page is "liked" and posts are "shared" between users, the more Wisconsin citizens and youth learn about the Conservation Congress and the great work we are doing!

Have a picture from a great hunt, trophy catch or summer vacation? Email me and I'll post it! Have a committee meeting, regional meeting, important topic or issue that the Congress plans to address? Email me and I'll post it. (I'll also probably ask you to "Like" the page and "share" the post!) It's time to start engaging the next generation, increasing contact with delegates and leadership and showcasing our great work to the general public. We

need your help to boost awareness, get on Facebook and "Like" Wisconsin Conservation Congress!



Bridging the Gap: A non-hunter's perspective

By Melissa Smith

For years now I've been frustrated by the fact that sportsmen (anglers and hunters) and environmentalists can't seem to get along. The frustration came from the fact that both groups are fighting for pretty much the same things, it seemed to me: Wild and natural places, a cleaner environment and the chance for our children and grandchildren to find joy, should they choose, in these places and in this great State of Wisconsin. But many sportsmen, have cast environmentalists, whom they call "treehuggers" amongst many other things, as the enemy, folks set on taking away their hunting, fishing and gun rights, even if that is not the case. Likewise, some hardcore environmentalists and animal welfare advocates see outdoorsmen as gun-toting, wing-nuts just interested in hooking and shooting everything they can.

I consider myself an outdoorswoman and an environmentalist (I believe in preserving wild places, sustenance hunting and that we are changing the climate, and not in a good way). But, truth be told, I felt kind of lonely out there in this space, and was left hoping that I was just part of some silent majority.

Then, last year, when elected as a delegate to the Wisconsin Conservation Congress, something I was quite proud to be a part of, I met many delegates that shared this common goal and believed in true conservation, with everyone's interests at heart, both environmentalists and sportsmen. They also believed, as I did, in true democracy, which often means opposing viewpoints coming together. I truly have found some friends in the congress that don't seem to mind that I am a non-hunter and appreciate what I have to bring to the table to compro-

mise for the greater good.

I believe in something that is gaining momentum: Compassionate Conservation. Compassionate conservation is concerned with the humane treatment and welfare of individual animals within the framework of traditional conservation biology in which the focus is on species, populations, or ecosystems. Again, often there is polarization between those interested in animal protection and those interested in conservation. It is all too easy to trump individual animal welfare for the widely shared goal of preserving biodiversity. Compassion for animals should be fundamental for conservation because poor conservation outcomes are often consistent with the mistreatment of animals and then in turn makes it difficult to understand for those who don't understand what sportsmen have to give towards conservation. I've heard

many delegates talk about respecting the animals that they hunt, and I can 100% support the Wisconsin hunters maintaining a high standard of ethical hunting practices. I am a person who can be willing to trade-off individuals' lives for the good of higher levels of organization such as ecosystems, populations or species. This in turn, is good for everyone, sportsmen, animal welfare advocates and environmentalists.

I look forward to another year in which we can try, collectively, to bridge that gap between sportsmen and environmentalists, to finally get us all working together toward our common goal: Conservation in Wisconsin. I hope my fellow delegates are just as excited about that possibility as I am.



Lee Fahrney presented Dave Ladd with the plaque identifying Ladd as the first ever inductee into the Wisconsin Conservation Congress Hall of Fame at a small ceremony in Iowa County. A number of Congress delegates were in attendance for this historic event.

Chair's Update continued from page 1

be holding a yellow perch summit in Milwaukee sometime at the end of October. I've been asked by the Department to be the moderator for this meeting. I will forward any future information I receive regarding this summit as soon as I get it.

2014 brings a new beginning to Wisconsin's white-tailed deer management. I don't know about you, but I for one, am excited about it. I'm ready to embrace change; being fully aware that with change, comes challenges. This is a great opportunity for us, for we have been given the role to lead this charge. There are a few in the state that strongly disagree with the Congress taking on this role. They will be observing us through a microscope, waiting for us to fail. Failure is not an option, so like I said at our convention, We Will Not Fail.

I know not everyone is able to participate on their County's Deer Advisory Council (CDAC), but that doesn't mean you shouldn't be involved. It's important that all of us stay informed with what is happening in our county. We each need to be prepared to assist those that may inquire about information regarding the progress of our county's advisory council.

The Conservation Congress is a great institution. We have a kaleidoscope of sportsmen and women, different in so many ways, and we are fortunate to have 360 delegates from across the state to enhance our vision with their outdoor sporting interests, giving willingly and passionately. We are a diverse group, but we still have a unified goal-to manage our natural resources for present and future generations. We must continue to focus on our strengths, such as our diversity, and use those strengths for the betterment of conservation.

For 80 years the Conservation Congress has faced many challenges, and

we will continue to face them. How we viewed those challenges is what has defined us! We've always chosen to see the challenges as stepping-stones....not as obstacles.

If we had chosen to see them as obstacles, then the challenges we faced would have been viewed as problems - problems that need to be overcome along with all the negative connotations associated with problems. A great deal of wasted energy would have been spent focusing on negative mindsets - mindsets like "we can't", "we won't", "we don't want to" and "we shouldn't have to."

The Congress however, has always chosen to see challenges as stepping-stones; opportunities that we have encountered along the way for us to "step on" so that we can achieve more, develop further and ultimately actualize more of our goals!

Among the many challenges we face today - let's focus on the attendance at our Spring Hearings. In 2000, statewide attendance for the hearings was 30,685. I don't necessarily believe that this record setting attendance was so much in response to dove hunting as it was to hunting in general. Yet, here we are 14 years later and the average attendance to the hearings seems to be about 1% of deer hunters we have in this state. It seems that if a question on the Spring Hearings Questionnaire doesn't pertain to one's specific interest, they just don't care and choose not to attend. If this is truly the case, nothing can be more evident, more so now than ever before, that we need to engage with the sportsmen and women as well as the non-sportsmen and women of this state. We need to attend more local sporting club meetings, banquets and safety classes and promote the Spring Hearings.

We need to unify as sportsmen and

women. We may not deer hunt, but we need to support those who do. We may not hunt with hounds, but we need support those who do. We may not trap or trout fish, but let us unify and support those who do. We must also reach out to the non-sportsmen and women in this state as well. Let's work together and try educating those who are against us or don't necessarily understand why we do what we do, because as anglers, hunters and trappers, we are all conservationists.

Wisconsin is a magical place - of that there is no doubt. But as sportsmen and women, we still face obstacles. I suppose it's a lot like a day in the field or on the water - magical and amazing. But then there is also the weather, the dog days of summer or fall, minimal land access, diminishing habitat, or perhaps not enough time in our busy lives to spend in the outdoors doing what we love to do.

We can look at these challenges as obstacles and it will spoil our day. Or we can look at them as stepping-stones - and it will be magical!

Whether in the words or on the water, I hope all of you continue to enjoy one of Wisconsin's magical places. it.

Shout Out to Scott Zimmermann!

Congratulations to Scott Zimmermann (Dodge County) recently elected president of the Wisconsin Trappers Association. Scott will do an excellent job with the WTA in continuing to protecting Wisconsin's trapping heritage.



Josh Hennlich (Milwaukee) with his sturgeon.



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Jayne Meyer, PR & Outreach
Alan Suchla, Historian

PO Box 7921
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*"Let us work together to
properly manage and wisely use
our natural resources..."*

- Prologue of the Congress Creed

Wisconsin Conservation Congress Calendar

Please visit the WCC website for up-to-date listings of all WCC meetings and events — go to dnr.wi.gov and search for "Conservation Congress."

SEPTEMBER

- 15-18/ 22-25 County Deer Advisory Council Mtgs—statewide
- 20 Outdoor Heritage & Education Committee Mtg—Plover
- 23/24 NRB Meeting—Madison
- 27 Great Lakes Committee Mtg—Milladore
- 27 Motorized Vehicle Ad Hoc Committee Mtg.—Milladore

OCTOBER

- 11 Rules & Resolutions Committee Mtg—Stevens Point
- 20 Executive Committee monthly conference call
- 20-23/ 27-30 County Deer Advisory Council Mtgs—statewide

- 25 Land Use Committee Mtg.—Milladore

- 28/29 NRB Meeting—Madison

NOVEMBER

- 1 Warm Water Committee Mtg—Milladore
- 17 Executive Committee monthly conference call

DECEMBER

- 1 Executive Committee monthly conference call
- 8-11/ 15-18 County Deer Advisory Council Mtgs—statewide
- 9/10 NRB Meeting—Madison
- 20 Rule Simplification Ad Hoc Committee—TBD

JANUARY 2015

- 9 Executive Council—Location TBD
- 27/28 NRB Meeting—Madison

MARCH 2015

- 1-15 Spring District Meetings

APRIL 2015

- 13 Annual DNR/WCC Spring Hearings

MAY 2015

- 14 Executive Council Mtg—Wausau
- 15/16 WCC Annual Convention—Wausau



David A. Pagel (Ozaukee) and his son David J. Pagel bagged these birds 90 minutes apart from a ground blind in Waupaca County.